



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Consumer Protection Bill Offered by Rep. Ott and Sen. Testin Receives Positive Response at Assembly Hearing

Bi-partisan bill aims to protect consumers from identity and credit fraud

Madison, WI- After the recent data breach at Equifax, over 140 million Americans may have had their credit information exposed, which could result in credit and identity fraud. In response to this massive breach, Representative Jim Ott (R- Mequon), and Senator Patrick Testin (R-Stevens Point) introduced Assembly Bill 565 (AB 565) earlier this year to enable consumers to freeze their credit reports without being charged a burdensome fee. The bill, which has bi-partisan support, received a positive response at public hearing in the Assembly Committee on Consumer Protection on December 19, 2017.

“Security breaches and identity theft have been increasingly problematic in recent years” said Representative Jim Ott. “Consumers are advised to place a credit freeze on their credit reports if they suspect any of their personal data may have been compromised. Since the reporting agencies don’t share requests for credit freezes a consumer must request a freeze from each of the three main credit reporting agencies. Our state also allows the agencies to charge ten dollars to remove the freeze, which would be necessary at the time the consumer desired to open any new credit card accounts.”

AB 565 corrects this situation by prohibiting a credit reporting agency from charging a consumer to place or remove a credit freeze, or for a request to release a credit report if a freeze is in place. With passage of this bill Wisconsin would join Maine, Indiana, and South Carolina as the only states to prohibit these fees across the board.

“The idea for this bill came from a constituent in Junction City who is fed up- and I feel the same way,” said Senator Testin. “This bill addresses a real need that people are experiencing right now.”

“It’s bad enough to have your personal data compromised through no fault of your own,” said Representative Ott. “It compounds the injustice when you have to pay for someone else’s failure to properly secure the data they have been entrusted with.”

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